RCCG NEWS

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RCCG Contact Information

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Important Dates

Sunday May 24 - Plant Swap at the Garden

Saturday, October 4 - Garden Potluck

Sunday, Ocober 5, Rain Date for Garden Potluck

October 18 - Saturday - Fall Clean up

October 19 - Sunday - Final Inspection



Soil, Weed & Season Update

By Anita Albertson

Soil Temperature:

As of April 26, the soil temperature is 66°F (measured at 1–10 cm depth by Precip AI). Tonight may dip into the mid-40s. Soil temps vary during the day—66°F is the low reading.

Conventional wisdom says wait until Mother's Day to plant tomatoes, peppers, basil, and squash. Still, the 10-day forecast looks clear of frost, so some gardeners have taken the plunge!









Weed Update:

Spring's here—and the weeds got the memo.

🌿 Regular Run-of-the-Mill Weeds:

- * Chickweed and Dandelions
- * Creeping Charlie and Dead Nettles
- * Henbit and White Clover

These aren't highly invasive. They're nitrogen fixers, easy to pull, and even edible (check before consuming!). Pull them before they go to seed—dry before composting.

Mid-Level Weeds:

More stubborn weeds include:

- * Grasses, thistles, cresses, buttercups
- * Garlic mustard, mock strawberry (yellow flowers)
- * Volunteer plants (like mint, baby fennels, oregano, thyme)
- These can often be potted to contain them.

Old Bad Actors:

- Pinellia Ternata (Lily Weed): Cobra-shaped flower, aggressive spreader. Dig deep to remove.
- * Mugwort: Spreads via root hairs—sift soil to clear.
- * Wire Grass: Tough to pull, roots cling tenaciously

Emergning Weeds:

- **★** Dichondra Repens Dense, matting ground cover. Dig 4" deep to remove. Don't compost
- Bindweed & Morning Glory Soil-surface runners. Hide near fences. Dig deep.
- * Porcelain Berry Invasive grape-lookalike. Remove completely.
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- * Porcelain Berry Invasive grape-lookalike. Remove completely.
- * Creeping Yellow Cress Yellow-flowered with invasive root system
- Nutsedge Not a grass! Spreads through seeds & tubers. Dig persistently.

₩elcome New Gardeners!

A warm welcome to our **12 new gardeners** for the 2025 season!

We're so glad you're here.

- Amanda Buckley AA03b
- Alice Doyle & Carolyn Greenspan AA04a
- Brian Heilman A03a
- Susan Rzeiman B02b
- Dana Sade B05a
- Dan Richardson C01b
- Lauren Sion C03a
- Thys Van Schaik C09a
- Sarah Simmons C10a
- Jo Russo D06b
- Inyru Ponce-Barger A04a
- Talida Serif F10b

We look forward to growing with you!



by Anita Albertson

Warm sun, gentle rains

By Anita Albertson
Warm sun, gentle rains
Seedlings become leaves.... become....
Pulling, digging weeds.

Spring

By Gerard Manley Hopkins (shared by Susan Galbraith)

Nothing is so beautiful as spring – When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush:

Thrush's eggs look like low heavens, and thrush Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring The ear, it strikes like lightning to hear him sing...

With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning In Eden's garden...



Featured Gardener - Frank Carlman

Our fellow gardener Frank Coleman hails from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the town of Waltham to be exact, which you would recognize at once by his distinctive accent with the two branches of his ancestry coming from Sweden and Italy.

He reckons he joined Rock Creek Community Garden twenty-eight years ago after he moved down to our area and a career working for Polaroid. His great passion, other than gardening, and one that has seen him traveling as a player, coach, manager, and, for a time, commissioner, is softball, which he has been playing since he was a young man. And he still is playing twice a week in an Over-Seventies League.

I get the feeling whatever he does, Frank approaches it with commitment of purpose and at the highest level of achievement.

This year, 2025, Frank was inducted in the Maryland Slow Pitch Softball Hall of Fame, and he proudly shared both the plaque and shirt with me when we sat down at the garden's picnic table. Cool bragging rights!

Franki is a serious and knowledgeable gardener with a special fondness for different kinds of tomatoes. He is also a people person and likes nothing better than sharing – which extends to his harvest. You might find yourself passing him and sharing a few pleasantries only to sit down for an extended chat covering a wide range interests and hobbies. Come summer, you might walk away with a choice tomato. It makes him happy.



Frank has taken on the volunteer leadership role for water maintenance and showed me several ideas he has to improve and safeguard our system. I hope he will gather some of us together and pass on good tips ad practices.

His wife Claire is an exceptional leader and teacher of English as a Second Language (ESL,) whose students go on to get placed in top union jobs and the like with major companies. They love to entertain outside in their landscaped garden with large patio a short ride from the garden.

Frank's enthusiasm for our garden community is unflagging and infectious. What a friend and mentor we all have in Frank!

Tips for Growing Great Tomatoes

By Camilla Gagliolo

Tomatoes are one of the most rewarding crops to grow. In Washington, DC's warm, humid summers and long growing season, tomatoes thrive with just a little extra care and planning. Whether you're a new gardener or a seasoned green thumb, you can enjoy healthy, delicious tomatoes all season long.

- * Soil: Tomatoes love well-draining, nutrient-rich soil. Mix in plenty of compost or aged manure before planting. I also add. crushed eggshells to the soil
- * Sun: Full sun—6–8 hours minimum daily. Morning sun is especially important for drying dew and preventing disease.
- Spacing: Don't crowd! Allow at least 18-24 inches between plants to ensure airflow and reduce fungal risk.
- * Watering: Deep, consistent watering at the base. Tomatoes prefer 1-2 inches of water per week. Avoid overhead watering to reduce leaf spot and blight.
- * Mulch: Use straw, shredded leaves, or compost to retain moisture, reduce temperature swings, and suppress weeds.
- **Support:** Stake, cage, or trellis early—before plants get too big. This helps prevent breakage and promotes even ripening.
- **Prune:** Remove suckers from between the main stem and branches to direct energy into fruit production and improve air circulation.
- * Feed: Use a balanced organic fertilizer or compost tea every 2-3 weeks. Avoid over-fertilizing with nitrogen. Too much nitrogen = lush leaves, few tomatoes.
- * Monitor: Watch for signs of disease (like yellowing leaves or black spots) and pests (aphids, hornworms). Use neem oil or spray with soapy water if needed.
- **Harvest Smart:** Pick tomatoes as they begin to ripen to avoid splitting or pest damage, then let them finish on a sunny windowsill.

Recipe Corner

Two Recipes from new gardener Alice Doyle

Radish Greens Pesto (via Loveandlemons.com)

Ingredients:

- ½ cup pine nuts
- 1 garlic clove
- ¼ tsp sea salt, pepper
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 cup radish greens
- 1 cup basil leaves
- ½-½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan (optional)

Instructions:

- Pulse pine nuts, garlic, salt, and pepper.
- Add lemon juice, radish greens, basil.
- Drizzle in olive oil. Add Parmesan last. Adjust oil for consistency.



Kale recipe from Shahram Vaezy

Ingredients

- kale
- onions
- garlic
- salt pepper turmeric
- maple syrup
- balsamic vinegar
- oregano lemon thyme

Instructions:

- Saute the onions..
- Add the garlic and spices. After a minute add syrup and vinegar.
- Cover and cook for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Add the herbs. Serve and use the kale florets as decoration.

Gordon Ramsay's Radish Salad (from cheframsayrecipes.com)

Ingredients:

- I bunch radishes (sliced 1/8")
- Juice & zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ¼ cup Parmesan
- 2 tbsp dill, torn
- Salt & pepper

Instructions:

- Toss sliced radishes with lemon juice + salt. Massage 1–2 minutes.
- Add oil, Parm, and dill.
- Plate and top with zest, extra cheese, and cracked pepper.

